9746

REASONS FOR PEACE,

STATED IN A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

THE UNION CHAPEL,

BIRMINGHAM,

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1795,

Being the Day appointed for

A GENERAL FAST.

By D. JONES.

ONE WOULD THINK THERE WERE SOME STATUTE LAW, PROHIBITING US, UNDER THE SEVEREST PENALTIES, TO PROFIT BY EXPERIENCE.

BISHOP SHIPLEY.

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THE author of the following diſcourſe thinks that every man is called upon to regard the ſtate of public affairs, with anxious attention, that every opportunity ſhould be embraced to make it the ſubject of diſcuſſion, and that labour to rectify opinion concerning it is well laid out. He has expreſſed himſelf freely in ſpeaking of prevailing meaſures: in this he can ſee nothing unbecoming the citizen of a free community, nothing that militates againſt the pretenſions of a good ſubject. To what boſom can the welfare of his country, if that country be a free one, be indifferent? How grovelling the ſoul that deems it not its higheſt happineſs

happineſs to deſerve well of it! To give it advice is a cheap way of putting in for the diſtinction.

But the author will be told, that politics ſhould be kept out of the pulpit. Though this maxim be allowed in general to be juſt, it does not follow, that it is to extend to ſuch occaſions as that on which this diſcourſe was delivered. A practice ſanctioned by a Shipley, a Price, and a Watſon, cannot be very unwarrantable. A man may be allowed to regard with unconcern the obloquy he may meet with in purſuing a track in which ſuch men have gone before him. And beſides, did not the ancient prophets inveigh againſt bad meaſures, and forewarn their country when they apprehended it to be in danger? Had the Jews of our Saviour's days been engaged in a traffic founded upon injuſtice, robbery, and murder; had they held the iron rod of oppreſſion over diſtant ſettlements, or carried on a moſt bloody and deſtruc-

tive

tive war, on ever ſhifting pretences, the delinquencies, becauſe of a political nature, would hardly have eſcaped the denunciations of our gentle Maſter.

The author regards the art of government like every other art, capable of endleſs improvements; of ſuch improvements he profeſſes himſelf a warm admirer, and would, at all times, be ready to lend them every ſupport; but then he wiſhes them to be gradual, to be ſuch as time and growing reaſon introduce. Had he been of opinion, that without violent changes we could taſte of no good, he would not have pleaded for peace. He conceives that his line, in that caſe, ſhould have been a zealous ſupport of the war.

The time perhaps may not yet be come, when the queſtion he conſiders can be attended to with ſufficient temper. Our heats, it may be, are not yet enough ſubſided. Proſelytes, he

he doubts not, will every day be made to his doctrine, and the time cannot be distant, when the abettors of the war will be confined to the interested and the dependent.

Good intentions, and a good cause, are no security against abuse. It is easy to call persons and things by harsh names. Should any chuse to serve the author and his discourse in the same way, he cannot dispute their right, nor promise them the satisfaction of feeling pain. If any one will prove his statements incorrect, his arguments fallacious, or his deductions wrong, the public may be benefited, and the least he can do will be to acknowledge himself obliged.

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BIRMINGHAM,
March 6, 1795.

SERMON, &c.

I AM FOR PEACE.

PSALM CXX, 7.

THE ſentiments I am about to advance, are the reſult of ſome attention to the ſcenes which, of late, have opened upon us. I requeſt they may be conſidered as thoſe of an individual. If guilt of any kind attach to them, let it implicate him only! It is in no degree chargeable upon his auditors; it ſhould call forth no cenſure of them, expoſe them to no ſort of inconvenience. With him ſolely ought reſponſibility to reſt. Let it not be hence inferred, that I hold lightly my perſonal ſafety, or the good opinion of others, or that I would, willingly, offend againſt the general notion, of the decorum to be obſerved in this place. But as I admit no ſacredneſs in places, I am entitled to the more latitude, both as to the choice of my ſubject, and the manner of treating it. The ſtate of our public affairs cannot be deemed a topic unapt for the occa-

ſion which has this day brought us together. In ſpeaking of it I mean to aſſert, what I conceive to be the natural right of every man, the avowed and acknowledged right, as well as incumbent duty of a Briton, that of ſtating, what appears to me, uſeful and important truths, ſuch as, if acted up to, would tend to reſtore to us that ſecurity, proſperity, and happineſs which, of late, have been ſo much upon the decline, and which every day ſeems but to ſubject to freſh hazards, and to beſet with new dangers.

I appeal to heaven for the purity of my intentions, for the ardour of my wiſhes, to lay before you nought but what is fair, juſt, and well-founded.

Accompany me while I take a retroſpective view of our affairs. It is, I own it, and I own it with ſorrow, a track in which you will meet with little to delight, or to flatter you, but a track, nevertheleſs, not barren of inſtruction. Review with me meaſures, unſucceſsful all will allow, and, in my opinion, no leſs ill judged. Let us, together, develope a buſineſs which, I take it, originated in miſtake, and in which I have not been able to diſcover a ſingle particular which would bear to be ſubmitted to the teſt of reaſon. Be not ſtartled at theſe aſſertions—they are not applicable to this nation alone. For nations, abounding with wiſe individuals,

individuals, to be chargeable with folly as reſpects their public meaſures, the hiſtory of the world proves to be nothing uncommon. If, in plunging into the war, to which this day owes its character, we acted precipitately and weakly, it is not the firſt time we have ſo acted. We ſhall find precedents, too, for the conduct among the moſt renowned and wiſe nations of antiquity, even Athens and Carthage, and Rome, furniſh them in rich abundance. The Cruſades, of later times, are out of no one's recollection, nor yet the outrageous zeal which animated the nations that embarked in them. But why go back to periods ſo diſtant, or to nations ſo remote, for examples of this ſort. Every period, every country abounds with them; our own furniſhes a quota inferior to that of none. Let me call to your mind a memorable war of the laſt century, into which we entered to ſecond the wicked views of a neighbouring deſpot upon an adjoining free ſtate. There were, I doubt not, in that day, who termed that war a *juſt* and *neceſſary* war, and who were ready to impeach the conſtitutional orthodoxy of ſuch as held it to be impolitic and iniquitous. Groan we not at this very moment under the burthens, bleed not many individuals among us from the wounds, which we owe to a war as wantonly provoked as it was weakly conducted, and ingloriouſly terminated? I mean the war which loſt us

our colonies, which tore violently from us part of ourſelves. If it then appear that the preſent war has been a meaſure neither wiſe nor juſt, let it excite no amazement. This does not mark it among our public proceedings.

Liſten to me, then, without wonder, while I give my opinion againſt a meaſure which has been contended by wiſe men to be a politic, by good men to be a laudable, by lovers of their country, and of mankind, to be a patriotic meaſure; while I endeavour to bring it home to the reaſon of every impartial perſon, that the war in which we are engaged, was, from the beginning, a wrong buſineſs, that we ought never to have entered into it, and that we ſhould embrace the firſt opportunity of getting out of it; that thoſe who have abetted and ſupported it, have been in an error, which they muſt have the magnanimity to renounce, if they would ſave their country. We daily err, why ſhould we not own it, eſpecially why ſhould we not own it in matters in which we truſt ſo much to the judgment of others, in which are ſo many ſprings and chains which lie out of our ſight. This, in my opinion, is a ſeaſon in which every man ſhould conſider himſelf as it were a public man, as every man feels, and may ſoon be called upon to act. No attempts, I conceive, ſhould be ſpared to unravel the ſophiſtry

which

which has ſo long bewildered our judgments, to make a ſtand againſt the clamour which ſo long bereft us of our ſenſes, to diſpel the torpor and lethargy in which the good ſenſe and reaſon of the country have been ſo long held.

It is now a little more than two years ſince we exchanged the bleſſings of peace for the ſtruggles of war. The hiſtory of France diſcloſes to us what led to this great circumſtance. The tyrannic nature of the government in that kingdom, the accumulation of grievances, the growth of abuſes, the profligacy and extortion of the great, co-operating with the diffuſion of light, and the example ſet by America, produced a burſt in favour of liberty, which raiſed the hopes of the friends of mankind, while it excited the fears of their enemies. Was the event itſelf little foreſeen? Equally removed from expectation were the effects it produced; theſe went far beyond what the firſt projectors of the buſineſs meditated. France framed for herſelf a new conſtitution. Her princes and her nobles quitted their native ſoil, and aſſigned as a reaſon, the overthrow of the former order of things. They projected its reſtoration, reckoning upon great ſupport within the kingdom, and promiſed much from without. The potentates of Auſtria and Pruſſia pretended an

intereſt in their quarrel, and took the field, it was underſtood, in order to aſſiſt the views of the exiles, and to reſtore to the French Monarch the rights of which he had been deprived. Large armies invaded France, and advanced a conſiderable way on their march to the capital. Suſpicions of treachery fell upon the Court; theſe operated the dethronement of the King, and the deſtruction of his friends; Royalty was aboliſhed, and France declared herſelf a republic. She diſplayed at this time an energy as ſurprizing as it was unexpected. She ſtopped the career of the invaders, and chaſed them, with immenſe loſs, beyond her frontiers. She added Savoy to her territory, as alſo the Low Countries and Liege. She proclaimed the navigation of the Scheldt free, and invaded Holland. Intoxicated by ſucceſſes out of the common courſe of things, the Convention paſſed the memorable decree for the relief of oppreſſed nations, brought the King to trial, and condemned him to loſe his head on the ſcaffold. With ſome of theſe meaſures other nations had no concern, while, it muſt be owned, that others were of a nature to rouſe thoſe who were moſt diſpoſed to quiet. From the beginning of this unhappy conteſt, two parties amongſt us have been at iſſue upon the grand queſtion, what ought to have been the conduct of this country towards France; the one thought that all means in our power were

to be uſed to preſerve neutrality, and that neutrality might have been preſerved; the other, and the prevailing one, were for meaſures that could not fail to embroil the two people.

Upon the firſt view of this buſineſs, I would aſk, was it for an enlightened nation, like the Britiſh, haſtily to have recourſe to an expedient ſo clumſy, ſo rough, and deſtructive, as that of war; an expedient which it was natural enough to adopt, when Juſtice had not yet been reſolved into its elements, when a general perception of its utility had not enſured it univerſal reſpect; natural enough when judicial combats were had recourſe to by individuals, to decide queſtions of right? Was it for a humane people to take to an expedient, which ſecures its ends by maiming and crippling thouſands, by ſhedding torrents of human blood; which condemns multitudes to extreme wretchedneſs, to waſte through want, or to ſink under unaccuſtomed hardſhips; to an expedient, the tendency of which is to blot out all that is tender in our nature, to efface all the kindneſſes of humanity; an expedient which calls forth and cheriſhes ferocious principles, which exhibits the human race as ſpurning the controul of reaſon, ſubmitting only to phyſical force? Was it for a country that glories in her Lockes, her Sydneys, and Ruſſells, was it for a nation that had

herſelf, ſo nobly, ſtruggled in the cauſe of liberty, to take eaſy offence from a people juſt become votaries of freedom?

Did courts advance in knowledge and morals, ſo as to keep pace with other bodies of men, ſhould we be afflicted by ſo many wars? When a cabinet determines upon a war, what does it do? It ordains that men ſhall be taken from their regular employ, from habits of ſobriety, from domeſtic enjoyments, and be made to paſs through ſcenes of idleneſs and diſſipation, be expoſed to death, and to far greater evils; that fertile and cultivated diſtricts ſhall be ravaged; populous and flouriſhing towns deſtroyed; that parents ſhall become childleſs, wives widows, and children fatherleſs; that inactivity, poverty, and deſpondency, ſhall take place of diligence, plenty, and chearfulneſs. What reaſons are ſtrong enough to determine a good man to adopt ſuch a meaſure?

On the firſt view of the thing, I again aſk, was it wiſe to enter into connexions which it was moſt unnatural for a free people to form? What reaſons could have force enough to induce us to ſhare in the councils, and to unite in the meaſures of ſtates, whoſe forms of government were moſt abhorrent from our own, moſt hoſtile to the freedom on which

we

we pride ourſelves, and to which we owe all our diſtinctions? What reaſons could be ſtrong enough to induce us to cement alliances with the plunderers of Poland, to make a common cauſe with deſpotiſm, to act with courts whoſe hoſtilities againſt France aroſe from that rooted averſion to liberty, inſeparable from their very being? Was it not painful to mix our banners with theirs, and with them to invade the territories of a people fighting for liberty and independence?

Figure to yourſelves a ſtate the moſt flouriſhing, a nation at its higheſt pitch of greatneſs, and you figure to yourſelves what Britain was at the beginning of this war. Was commerce ever more active, manufactures more alive, agriculture more attended to, did wealth ever flow in faſter, was our proſperity greater at any preceding period; I aſk, then, was this a ſituation lightly to be relinquiſhed? What could juſtify a nation that relies ſo much on her foreign traffic, that needs all the reſources internal and external ſhe can command, in depriving herſelf of them? At this preſent time what would have been her ſtate, had neutrality been preſerved? She would have ſecured to herſelf a choice of the commerce of the world, would have been arbitreſs of the affairs of Europe, would have been able to reſtore tranquillity to the belligerent powers. When were ſo

many

many powerful and commanding conſiderations ſet againſt a meaſure, as our ſituation furniſhed againſt the war in which we are at this time engaged? In deſpite of them, how came we to enter into it? The reaſons alledged for this ſtep, I ſhall here enumerate.

We were in danger from French principles; it became us to check them.

The French had ſhaken the foundations of civil ſociety, we muſt ſee to the ſafety of the edifice.

They had outraged humanity, we muſt vindicate its rights.

They had inſulted religion, we muſt be its champions.

They had ſet up a republican form of government, deemed by us ill ſuited to a large territory, and hardly compatible with the ſafety of our limited monarchy.

Whether we ſhould have gone to war on theſe grounds alone, I pretend not to determine. We were furniſhed with others which hold a principal place among thoſe, on which the juſtification of the meaſure is reſted. Our ally

was

was invaded, the faith of treaties in the caſe of the Scheldt was violated, a diſpoſition to interfere in the affairs of other nations was openly profeſſed. Allow me, briefly, to examine theſe ſeveral grounds, that we may ſee how far they bear us out in our proceedings.

We were in danger from French principles; we muſt check them.

Was war the beſt mode of attaining this end? Why did we not call out our philoſophers and men of letters, our learned profeſſors of the South and the North; why were they not rouſed, and ordered to make a ſtand againſt the French propagandiſts? This would have been a pleaſant and a profitable, as well as a bloodleſs conteſt*. Little treaſure would have done, ink indeed might have flown, but blood would have been ſpared. It is not to be ſuppoſed that there is not ability enough, that there is not information enough in this country to defend reaſon againſt ſophiſtry,

* What a misfortune it is Mr. Pitt did not feel in this caſe as he has done ſince in a ſimilar one. "It was eligible to contend againſt the weight of opinions," than againſt that of actual force. See his ſpeech on Mr. Wilberforce's motion, February 27, 1795. It is an obſervation of Voltaire's, that a powerful King may ſend *one hundred thouſand* of his ſubjects at any time to be *butchered*, but that he cannot *change* the *opinion* of *one man*.

truth

truth againſt falſehood, ſound and valuable principles againſt ſuch as are falſe and pernicious. Why muſt the ſword then be drawn, why muſt lives be ſacrificed, why muſt the induſtrious ſtand ſtill, why muſt the poor ſtarve, a whole people be diſtreſſed? But why were we to fear French principles? If any of them were good, why did we not profit by them, if they tended to expoſe any corruptions or abuſes which had got footing among us, we ought to have removed thoſe corruptions, and corrected thoſe abuſes. If our neighbours circulated falſe doctrines, we were not obliged to ſubſcribe to them, or to act upon them. At the period here referred to we were, truly, in no danger from French principles. The ſtrongeſt aſſurances of attachment to the conſtitution, and the warmeſt profeſſions of loyalty were made by the whole nation. I may venture to ſay, the monarchical part of the conſtitution was never in leſs danger. I wiſh I could apply the ſame obſervation to the popular. It is much to be lamented, that ſober and well-meaning men, who prized liberty, did, while they thought they were only ſetting their faces againſt thoſe who entertained deſigns hoſtile to our form of government, give countenance to the arbitrary maxims and deſpotic doctrines, which were at this time ſo induſtriouſly propagated,

The French had ſhaken the foundations of civil ſociety, we muſt ſee to the ſafety of the edifice.

If artificial diſtinctions of barbarous, and comparatively late origin, to which the nations of antiquity were, in a great meaſure, ſtrangers; if names connected with things which had fallen, or ought to have fallen, with the feudal ſyſtem, be thought eſſential to the well being, if not to the very being of ſociety, grown as they were in France into objects of diſlike, was foreign compulſion the mode moſt likely to get them re-adopted? Was this the way to get the ſoil which had rejected them, to receive them again, and prove kind to them? Was there not a more practicable way of dealing with a great, high-ſpirited people, who, perhaps, have little reaſon, but who certainly have little diſpoſition to look to their neighbours for inſtruction? Were there principles let looſe in France, which, in reſpect to the maſs upon which they were to act, were too repulſive for the purpoſes of organization? What could better correct this repulſion than the external preſſure which, proceeding from the hoſtile confederacy, acted upon the new ſyſtem? This force from without did away that which was ſuperabundant in the principles, brought on a balance between the jarring elements, and threw them into ſpheres proper for adheſion and ſolidity. Without this foreign

preſſure, the particles might have remained ſo mutually repellent, ſo indiſpoſed to harmonize, ſo afloat and confuſed, as to have rendered neceſſary ſuch an accumulation of force at the center, as would have been conformable to the wiſhes of the combined courts. The threats of the coaleſced powers, the deſigns of partition aſcribed to theſe powers, averſion to being dictated to in the management of their own affairs, ſtifled all differences, united all intereſts, required ſacrifices which ſerved, at one and the ſame time, to engender public ſpirit, and to form republican manners. If danger is to be apprehended to civil ſociety from governments founded on the rights of man, it is principally chargeable upon us and our allies; if evils are to ariſe from the eſtabliſhment of a republican regimen in France, the ſame parties are anſwerable, for the republic is more a creature of the ſituation into which the coalition of kings threw France, than the work of the French people.

The French outraged humanity; we muſt vindicate its rights.

With outrages upon humanity, grievous and ever to be lamented, are our neighbours moſt certainly to be charged. But of theſe outrages what were the cauſes? The love of freſh-gotten liberty wound up the ſpirit of the people to the higheſt pitch;

pitch; unfortunately there lay no where power enough to reſtrain this ſpirit. It was ſuffered to diſplay itſelf in deeds at which the light of day bluſhed. Was hoſtile interference, however, adding to the cauſes which firſt conjured it up, which excited it to ſuch horrid exceſſes, the way to lay it; was it not to enſure its continuance; was it not the way to ſtrengthen it, to render it, in a degree, neceſſary; was it not to furniſh the ſtrongeſt juſtification of its proceedings? The following ſtatement of facts will ſhew what humanity has gained by our hoſtile interference. The Pruſſian General iſſued an imperious mandate in favour of the French King; in a few days ſubſequent to the appearance of this manifeſto, the Monarch is dethroned and impriſoned. The combined armies take fortreſſes, and advance into the country; the horrid maſſacres of September are perpetrated. The royaliſts ſpirited by the diſſenſions of the republicans, and buoyed up by the promiſe of foreign aſſiſtance, make a ſtir; the unhappy Prince is brought to his trial, and mounts the ſcaffold. The French Commanders are treacherous, the allies are ſucceſsful; illuſtrious victims paſs under the guillotine. Inſurrections take place in the interiour; a ſanguinary faction eſtabliſhes itſelf. The fate of war is reverſed; the French are victorious, they ceaſe to have apprehenſions from foreign powers, and, in their turn,

excite them; we ſee terror replaced by juſtice, ſtate executions at an end, moderation profeſſed, and many meaſures, it muſt be owned, conſonant to it adopted. Does not this ſtatement demonſtrate, that the exceſſes which have obtained in France, are not wholly to be laid at the door of the French people, but are chargeable, in part at leaſt, upon the powers at war with them? You ſee then how much humanity is obliged to us.

The French inſulted religion, we muſt be its champions.

Muſt every feature of abſurdity which diſtinguiſhed the old cruſades, appear prominent in the modern one? Can war aid religion? Can hoſtile weapons, ſerve it in any ſhape? Is it in the point of the ſword to prove that there is a God, in a cannon ball to demonſtrate, that man ſurvives the diſſolution of the body? In naval and field victories, or ſhould I not rather ſay, in defeats and flights, to implant in French boſoms principles of piety; in the ſeizure of their richeſt colonies, to teach them ſound morals; in hoſtilities of the moſt unrelenting kind, to cool violent heats, to ſuperinduce moderation, and to awake human feelings? Did the French overturn religion? Aſtoniſhing people! All your atchievements prove you ſuch.

This

This outdoes all. What the Diocletians and Julians of antiquity eſſayed, in vain, to accompliſh in a ſucceſſion of years, ye had the power and addreſs to bring about, as it were, inſtantaneouſly. A religion, the progreſs of which, in its infant ſtate, they could never arreſt, this religion poſſeſſing the credit of long eſtabliſhment, interwoven with the moſt powerful intereſts in the country, ye, we are told, completely overſet. Upon a cloſer inſpection, however, of the matter, we find that the overthrow of religion is not to be inſerted in the liſt of your exploits, nor yet to be added to the catalogue of your crimes. Religion had diſappeared long before you aſſerted your rights; its ſhadow remained, this you chaced, a ſuperſtition in the laſt ſtage of its decline you overturned, you curtailed the wages of hypocriſy, and the phantom ſlunk out of ſight. That there exiſts ſo little religion in France, is a circumſtance much to be lamented; but for that circumſtance the revolution has not to anſwer; it is to be laid to the charge of the Romiſh corruptions, to that of the profligacy and infidelity of the clergy*.

* A gentleman who has lately left France ſtates, that over moſt of the public places, and many private houſes in Paris, is this inſcription in large characters, "The French people acknowledge the being of a God, and the immortality of the ſoul." How long is the calumny, the French are all Atheiſts, to remain in circulation? How abſurd to lay to the charge of a whole people, ſpeculations entertained by a few individuals!

The French ſet up a republican form of government. We deemed this ill ſuited to a large territory, and hardly compatible with the ſecurity of our own limited monarchy.

Was it to be ſuppoſed that the French would ever have ſubmitted to a form of government dictated to them by ourſelves and our allies? Had we and they really been inveſted with the infallibility to which the Pope pretends; had we realized in ourſelves the diſintereſtedneſs of ancient philoſophy; would it have been decent to attempt intruding upon an independent people a ſervice which they did not ſolicit; upon a people too, whoſe treaſure of talents, whoſe maſs of information we have had but too many occaſions to know, and which it muſt argue the moſt pitiful and determined ignorance to queſtion? For the Cabinets of Vienna, Berlin, Madrid, and Turin to inſtruct France on ſubjects of government! For the plunderers of Poland to arm in the cauſe of religion! what ſights are we of theſe times called upon to witneſs! Would to God the preſumption and the folly had in theſe matters lain ſolely at the door of ignorance and deſpotiſm!

Why have we heard ſuch high commendations of *pure* monarchy? Is that to be deſcribed as a bleſſing which our forefathers would never ſubmit to, and which they were at the hazard of their lives to cut off from their deſcendants? *Unqualified*

monarchy has been extolled, as if every thing bearing that name contained a charm, in which lay the happineſs of nations, as if it were a ſpecific for all human ills, a political regimen under which oppreſſion and miſery could not take place, a ſoil where the virtues ſprung and matured, where wiſdom ruled, and tranquility held an uninterrupted reign. At the ſame time our ears have been dinned by ſenſeleſs exclamations againſt republicaniſm, which ſeemed to argue an entire ignorance of the times which have preceded us, and of the countries which ſurround us. Have we forgotten that civilization, arts, letters, and ſcience, originated in republics? Have we forgotten thoſe favourite ſpots of Greece, thoſe renowned maritime towns of Aſia Minor, rendered illuſtrious by men whoſe fame has filled the world, and whoſe works have engaged the admiration of ages? What is the pride and boaſt of our government, unqueſtionably its popular, its republican part, that which ſecures to the people the diſpoſal of their own property, which places in their hands a check upon all the functions of government, which makes them ſubject to the laws alone, to laws originating with themſelves, to which they have given their conſent, and of the intention and application of which they are the ſole arbiters. We have our monarchy in common with Ruſſia, Pruſſia, Spain, and Turkey, but there is a part of our conſtitution

which allies us to Athens, to Rome in its better days, and to the illuſtrious free ſtates of modern times, and for which we ſtand indebted for our reſemblance to the citizens of ſuch free communities. We ſhould not under-rate this part of our conſtitution, nor ſuffer it to be traduced. While I expoſe bigotry on the ſubject of forms of government, let no one impute to me a deſire of indirectly attacking our own admired conſtitution. I am deeply impreſſed with the bleſſings we have enjoyed under it, and have no wiſh beyond that of ſeeing it rid of the corruptions and abuſes which have crept into it.

If the republican be a form of government ill ſuited to the extent of France, or, for any other reaſon, ill calculated to anſwer the ends for which governments are inſtituted, why did we not leave it to experience to work conviction in the buſineſs? Why did we not leave to the operation of the machine to expoſe its defects, and avoided that boundleſs profuſion to which our mode of ſhewing it has led. From an inveterate enemy, and inveterate our language, the ſacrifices we make, and the hazards we riſque, prove us to be, will the recommendation of monarchy be made with any force? On the contrary, will it not be made to the greateſt poſſible diſadvantage? Sticklers for monarchy, we have done away every chance of its reſtoration in France; calumniators of republicaniſm, we have ſtrengthen-

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ed devotion to it. Are there no other republics in Europe? Why ſhould that of France alone be terrific? Why ſhould we dread that a government which, in our judgment, is pregnant with ills, ſhould, in its neareſt neighbours, in thoſe who will have the beſt opportunity of learning its effects, beget admiration, and induce them to diſcard what we are told is the beſt conſtitution in the world, and what has proved itſelf to be a very good one? Why ſhould not republican France have a ſimilar, or a greater dread of Engliſh monarchy? Did the ancient deſpotiſm of France endanger, in this way, the freedom of England? Why ſhould it be imagined that its democratic regimen will interrupt our public order? Are Engliſhmen ſo weak as to prefer French evil to Engliſh good, to give up their own excellent form of government to receive ſecond hand from France, what we are told will never produce aught but miſery? How idly and inconſiſtently with their own principles do ſuch perſons talk! What crude phantoms do they conjure up to ſcare us, and to induce us to relax in our zeal in favour of pacific meaſures?

Though the reaſons now conſidered be allowed inſufficient to warrant the commencement of hoſtilities, did there not exiſt others which rendered the meaſure juſt and neceſſary? Was not our ally

 invaded?

invaded? Was not the faith of treaties violated? Was not a diſpoſition to interfere in the affairs of other nations avowed by our neighbours? This muſt be admitted, and it muſt be admitted alſo, that here was a call for interference, and would to God we had interfered before France had committed herſelf, by adding one ſingle furrow to her territory? While ſhe was converting her acquiſitions into departments, why were we then ſilent? It is difficult to ſay which was moſt culpable, this ſupineneſs, or our more recent activity? It ought not, however, to have been forgotten, that in an enlightened and cultivated age, war ought never to be entered into till negociation has failed. Were we, on this occaſion, mindful of the maxim; did we diſcover that predilection in favour of pacific meaſures proper for all people, and for all times, but eminently and emphatically proper for England in the circumſtances and in the ſituation in which ſhe then ſtood? Had we acted in this conjuncture as became a great and juſt people, requiring explanations of conduct juſtly held offenſive; had we appealed to neutral nations, called upon them to unite in remonſtrances againſt a ſyſtem which threatened the balance and the peace of Europe, we ſhould, I doubt not, have found ourſelves placed at the head of a combination, whoſe cauſe and whoſe power equally mighty, would have inſured ſatisfaction to all reaſonable demands, and

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what carnage, havoc, and profuſion, what miſery, pain, and anguiſh would have been ſpared? This wary and ſure mode of conduct we diſdained, we ruſhed headlong into all the views and plans of the combined powers. Sacrifices the moſt coſtly that nation ever made, were offered with as little dignity as judgment; we rendered, by our conduct, cheap, what we might have had, at leaſt, the ſatisfaction of paſſing for the greateſt favours. We ſeemed either eager to ſhare in the ſpoils with Auſtria and Pruſſia, or envied them the glory of reſtoring the ancient deſpotiſm of France. We ſeemed deſirous, by our preſent zeal, to atone to the confederacy for our paſt tardineſs. But are we not told, that the war was not a matter left to our option; did not the French declare war? There is alſo another queſtion; did we not drive them to the meaſure? That France did not wiſh war; that, on the contrary, ſhe was deſirous of being on terms of good neighbourhood with England, I infer not merely from her profeſſions, but from conſidering the ſtate of parties in her interiour, and from her ſituation without. When we called home our ambaſſador, her's remained here, his commiſſion was renewed by the executive council on the death of the king, but we refuſed to receive him in a public character. Orders were ſent him to quit the kingkom. The ſame orders were repeated to a French

envoy, who had been ſent to make another offer to treat with us. On the part of France could ſtronger indications of a pacific diſpoſition have been manifeſted? I aſk every impartial man, to whom was it owing that hoſtilities enſued? While the diplomatic correſpondence which paſſed between a member of the Britiſh cabinet and the French miniſter; while the acts which paſſed the legiſlature at this period, and particularly one that was to be conſidered by previous ſtipulation as a breach of the treaty between the two nations are extant; while it is recollected what preparations we were making, it cannot remain matter of doubt, who commenced hoſtilities. I know it has been ſtudiouſly endeavoured, all along, to miſrepreſent this buſineſs, and to lay the aggreſſion at the door of the French; but if, as we are for ever told, it be commendable to continue hoſtilities, why was it not commendable to commence them? If policy and juſtice require the war ſhould be carried on, why did not policy and juſtice require it ſhould be entered into? If peace, at this time, be incompatible with the public welfare, why ſhould we ſo ſtudiouſly ward off the charge of having been the firſt to break it? What is contended to be in exiſting circumſtances a bleſſing, for ſuch do ſome men repreſent war to be, why ſhould we hold ourſelves indebted to the French for it? The inconſiſtency here ſtrips the diſingenu-

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ouſneſs of its guiſe. We had griefs; we would not treat with thoſe who held the reins of government in France; we thought the French only worthy to meaſure ſwords with. Who, then, declined negociation? On whom faſtens the charge, be it meritorious, or be it reprehenſible, of having commenced the conteſt? Into ſuch a pitch of degeneracy did we conſider the whole French nation as fallen, that it could not furniſh one perſon with whom our miniſter could treat, on what concerned the intereſts of the two people*? In reading hiſtory, I have been often ſtruck by the abſurdity and folly of the oſtenſible reaſons for the conduct of courts; but a caſe to match, in this reſpect, that which I have now ſtated, I have never met with.

* Great indeed muſt have been French degeneracy! For we have not uſually been nice as to the parties with whom we have had cloſe political fellowſhip. We have, it has been happily obſerved, conſuls at Algiers, we have ſent preſents to Deys reeking hot with the blood of their neareſt relatives, have made treaties with the Indians to butcher our American brethren, the Mahrattas have been our confederates. We are now in alliance with a Princeſs, whoſe behaviour towards her ſovereign and her huſband, is well known, and whoſe late conduct in Poland would, if it were poſſible, add to the deteſtation in which ſhe is held. Snatching liberty and independence from a moſt quiet, peaceable people, ſhe declares in her notification to the miniſters from foreign courts, "that influenced by her *well known love of clemency*, ſhe had taken the Poliſh nation under her immediate protection."

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From the view of our conduct, as it reſpected our affairs abroad, I haſten to ſtate what it was at home. If we expect to find in our proceedings the cool and calm deliberation adapted to the criſis, we ſhall be diſappointed. The nation was wrought up to a pitch of deluſion, which did credit to the management of the actors, and of which it will, I fear, long rue the conſequences. Sickening, at this time, would be the detail of groundleſs and malicious outcries, of falſe alarms, imaginary plots, and fancied conſpiracies, by which the credulity of the nation was impoſed upon, and its good ſenſe trifled with. Moderation was proſcribed, reaſon was baniſhed, its voice could not be heard; he who was not hearty for the war, who did not wiſh France one ſea of blood, and the confederacy with all its unexplained views triumphant, was pronounced diſaffected to the conſtitution of his country, unworthy the name of Briton: he hardly lived in ſafety. Paſſion boiled in the boſoms of our leaders, and communicated with intenſeneſs, which grew as it diffuſed itſelf to the maſs of the people. War! war! war! became every where the cry.

Thus we took leave, at once, of our neutrality and of our greatneſs, of our peace, and of our proſperity; thus a blow was given Britain, which it is

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for hiſtory to deſcribe, and for us to feel. Before I ſtate ſuch of its effects as have already tranſpired, ſuffer me to call to your recollection the ſanguine expectations with which we began this buſineſs of blood.

The conteſt we were told would be of ſhort duration, and on our part terminate gloriouſly. We were ſure to attain the ends we aimed at. The mighty combination into which we had entered, muſt carry all before it. The diſaffected in the interiour of France, and theſe, it was ſaid, were the bulk of the inhabitants, kept in awe by a daring few, would co-operate with us; drained reſources and famine were to be our auxiliaries, and heaven, whoſe battles we fought, would proſper our undertakings. The divine vengeance would direct the weapon home, the goodneſs of our cauſe would pave the way to ſucceſs, the wickedneſs of the enemy was to make victory certain. The Anarchiſts, Atheiſts, and murderers, would fly like ſheep before the orderly, religious, and humane troops of the Princes of this ſecond ſacred league; never was hope more confident, never was anticipation leſs on the reſerve. The terms to be offered France, her reduced limits, the form of government to be preſcribed her, were topics on which the freedom of converſation wantoned. We promiſed ourſelves

indemnity

indemnity more than ample, a harveſt rich in glory, and in other more ſolid advantages. Britain was ſoon to witneſs proud days. Theſe were not the dreams of weak and ignorant perſons, but the declared expectations of ſtateſmen, to which if you were ſlow in giving aſſent, you were deemed unjuſt to your country and the cauſe it had eſpouſed. But, oh merciful heaven! what is the reality to which we have been rouſed? How have theſe expectations been anſwered? Alas! Prepare to witneſs the greateſt contraſt that ever eye beheld, diſappointment of as enormous a ſize as ever inexperience and folly felt. Is it credible that twelve months have not yet elapſed ſince we were amuſed with the hopes of our troops marching victoriouſly into the capital of the enemy?

Had we, before we commenced hoſtilities, foreſeen their effects as they now appear, ſhould we have ever commenced them? Had we been told when we began the conteſt, how ineffectual it would prove, ſhould we have entered the liſts? Had we been told, you will be obliged at laſt to abandon to its fate the ally in whoſe defence you draw the ſword; you will fly in all directions before the enemy; the poſſeſſions you take will coſt you immenſe ſums, and you will be unable to retain them. Your naval victories will turn to no account,

count, for your exports and imports will glut the markets of France, your ſhips will crowd her ports, and your ſeamen overflow her priſons. You will laviſh ſums upon your allies, which will make Europe ſtare, but which will only ſerve to ſhew the dimenſions of their treachery, the little diſpoſition they have to co-operate with you, and the contempt in which they hold you. The whole burthen of the war will lodge upon your ſhoulders, and, finally, you will, moſt probably, be left in it alone. Your commerce and manufactures will be at the loweſt ebb, your poor will want employ, your liberties be abridged, you will bend under the preſſure of additional taxes, you will take large ſtrides towards that period in which you will neither have credit to add to the principal of your debt, nor reſources to pay the intereſt*; families now reſpect-

* Theſe words of Mr. Fox's have, doubtleſs, before caught the readers eye, but they ought to impreſs his heart. "He wiſhed, he ſaid, the Houſe to conſider, if this (war) ſhould go on, whether greater taxes would not be neceſſary, and whether it would not be reaſonable to look at that *epoch*, when the *reſources of the country* would *fail*. *Such an event was certainly unavoidable, if the preſent ſyſtem were carried on*, and he was afraid we were getting within ſight of our reſources: Whether ſo lamentable an event would take place in a year or two, he could not determine, but he was afraid that in a ſhort time we muſt be driven to that term beyond which it would be impoſſible for any country to go.

If,

able, reduced from affluence to penury, will feel anguiſh which mocks deſcription. Had we been told that theſe would have been the fruits we ſhould have reaped, ſhould we have parted ſo readily with the bleſſings of peace? Had it had been told us; after a trial of two years of the expedient you are now ſo bent upon adopting, after you ſhall have loſt ſixty thouſand of your brave countrymen, expended immenſe treaſures, your enemy, inſtead of being weaker, will be more powerful than ever; it will have driven you and the confederates far from its frontiers, will have made vaſt acquiſitions of territory, hold in its hand the keys to the ſeveral countries that ſurround it, will have terminated a campaign, which, for brilliant ſucceſſes, has no parallel in the annals of modern Europe*; its naval force will be

"If, however, even at the preſent calamitous period, we ſhould turn our views to a peace, and ſhould obtain it, it was not at all improbable, notwithſtanding the immenſe additional burthen it would be neceſſary to lay on the people, if a peace could be inſtantly procured, that we might again be brought by the genial influence of tranquillity, to our former ſtate of proſperity and happineſs."

Mr. Fox's Speech on the Budget.

* *Abſtract of the operations of the French Armies in the Campaigns of* 1794.

Twenty-three ſieges ſucceſsfully conducted.
Six pitched battles deciſively won.

Two

ſuperior to what it ever was before, and will be reinforced by that of your former ally, if not by that of another power, over which, by conqueſt or alliance, it muſt ſoon have aſcendancy; its government will diſplay unequalled energy, activity, and addreſs; exhibit a moderation more alarming to its adverſaries than its victories; the people will be united at home, all diviſions, broils, and civil wars at an end, no leſs attached than ever to republicaniſm, as averſe as ever to all the modifications of monarchy: had we been told theſe things when we began the war, ſhould we ſo cordially have given it our ſanction; ſhould we have given it ſuch warm ſupport, ſhould we not have pauſed and deliberated a little, ſhould we not have tried what negociation could have effected; and could negociation have effected leſs than the war has done? Had it been told us, that inſtead of ſharing the ſpoil, inſtead of parcelling out France, we ſhould have felt ſerious apprehenſions for our own iſland, ſhould we ſo lightly have bid adieu to peace? Have we attained one ſingle object we propoſed by this war; have we not failed in every one? To what ſhadow of good

Two thouſand eight hundred and three pieces of cannon taken.

Sixty thouſand of the beſt troops of Europe compelled to ſurrender priſoners of war, either by capitulation or in the field.

One hundred and forty-four towns and cities captured, among them many of the ſtrongeſt fortreſſes in Europe.

Marquis of Lanſdowne's Speech on the Addreſs to his Majeſty.

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can its continuance then lead? Why expend millions; why, good God! are ſo many of our fellow creatures to fall? Why, in the name of humanity, are our feelings to be harrowed with ſuch tragic details as we have of late been accuſtomed to peruſe? Is ſuch the language which the paſt holds out to us? What ſays the future? It requires little penetration to decypher the characters which mark its page; the deſpondency viſible in the countenances of reflecting perſons of all parties, explains the nature of its contents. Yes, it is agreed upon all hands, that if preſent meaſures undergo not a ſpeedy change, we ſhall be placed in a ſituation very new, very new indeed. We ſhall have to combat not for our trade, not for this or that iſland, not for this or that diſtant ſettlement, but for our homes, for Britain itſelf, for our independence as a nation. The conteſt muſt decide whether or no we are to crouch before a foreign power, whether we are to hold up our heads in the preſence of our neighbours. It is not our unprotected poor that will then fight our battles; men of all ranks and orders* muſt obey the

* Says a late writer in favour of the war, "What we cannot equal for foreign attack, we may approach for home defence, were *every man* of a given property, between the ages of fifteen and ſixty, regimented, armed, and liable to be called out; the property or the individual to decide whether he ſhould ſerve in the cavalry or infantry, and no exemption whatever to be allowed to *rank* or *profeſſion*."

An Idea of the preſent State of France, p. 35.

call

call of their country, muſt encounter the dangers of the field, ſubmit to the hardſhips of the camp. Hoſtile troops ravage the ſoil of Britain! Farewell domeſtic endearments! Farewell the tendereſt ties! Her beſt ſons, alas! now bleed; her moſt valuable citizens fall! They are brave, but they face an enemy inured to war. But, why, in the name of all the comforts and delights of tranquillity and ſecurity, are we to be brought into this ſituation? Why are the plains of Britain to be laid waſte, its towns to be ſacked and deſtroyed? Why muſt conſternation ſeize the young and old? Why is every hamlet, every village, every ſtreet, to have its diſconſolate widow, its helpleſs orphans, its ſorrowful parents, and weeping relatives? Why is the voice of lamentation to be heard from every corner? Why is mourning to become general through the land? Britons, have you it in your power to avert theſe evils, and will you let ſelf-ſufficiency and obſtinacy involve us in them? I reprobate the policy that has brought us into this ſituation, but I more reprobate the pride that diſdains to enter into explanations with an enemy, that is, happily, if public rumour be well founded, no leſs deſirous of peace than we are, or ought to be. Will, then, the people of this country be perſuaded, in contradiction to every principle that ought to rouſe them, to delay the return of peace? But I will not reſt my appeal with your

 feelings,

feelings, I will addreſs myſelf to your reaſon. It is admitted on all hands, that we are in a ſtate which renders peace moſt deſirable, but it would wound our honour to ſue for it. Pray what is this honour to which ſo much is to be ſacrificed, and for which ſo much is to be riſqued? Is it a monſter that feeds upon the groans of the dying, the anguiſh of the diſtreſſed, and the cries of the poor; and will it be more ſatisfied when it has plentifully regaled upon theſe ſacrifices for another year? Will it not then be greedy of additional offerings of the ſame kind? Away with ſuch honour, I underſtand it not. Let us be juſt, let us be humane, we need not bluſh to be the firſt to move, that an end be put to reciprocal evil. I propoſe the queſtion ſeriouſly to every advocate of the war: In the continuance of this conteſt, to what good do you look? If under ſuch favourable auſpices we are come to our preſent paſs, under ſuch evil ones ſhall we get out of it? What can you expect from a vanquiſhed, diſpirited, half broken up confederacy? What can you expect from yourſelves, divided as you are, a large and growing majority condemning the war? We are in an unfavourable ſituation for treating, it muſt be owned, but is it likely to mend? Is this within the utmoſt verge of probability? Do you think it will not get worſe; dare you hope that calamities will not come thick upon us, will not

advance with a rapidity which has never yet been witneſſed, ruſh in a confluence of which there is no parallel in our paſt experience? Shall we not, then, rouſe like one man to a ſenſe of our danger, again welcome peace and all its bleſſings? Liſten not to the counſels, be not dupes to the arts of men, who wiſh to retrieve reputation, who hope, by the ſucceſſes of the future, to make us forget the diſaſters of the paſt; to theſe men we have made ſacrifices enough already, more than any ſervices they have rendered us ever entitled them to. You have tried war long enough, try it no longer, take to the olive branch, hold it out to the enemy, ſee what effect it will have. The act will, at leaſt, yield you the pleaſing conſciouſneſs, that the ſhedding of blood, the carnage, the havock, the deſolation, the diſtreſs which at preſent deform the aſpect of human affairs, are not owing to you. Friends of peace, are you enemies to your country? Who would perſuade you to this; you have been too long miſled, you have too long miſplaced your confidence. You muſt give yourſelves ſome credit for judgment and underſtanding, and act up to their beſt dictates, or you will regret your want of manlineſs, it may be, when too late. Yes, bid peace return. Be the cry every where Peace! Peace! Peace! Peace will again awaken chearfulneſs, will bring back content, will reſtore plenty, will give ſcope to enterpriſe, will open a field to induſtry, will give all hands em-

 ployment,

ployment, the poor bread, and baniſh want from our borders. The innumerable bands now employed for bloody and deſtructive purpoſes, will toil in procuring food, and in multiplying comforts. Promoters of peace, are you to be told, that you attempt injuries to your country; if ſuch be injuries, may they befall it! and may heaven ſoon deprive it of the bleſſings of war! My countrymen, if, in deſpite of every forcible conſideration, if blind to our deareſt intereſts, if deaf to the cries of proſtrate bleeding humanity, we perſevere in this mad buſineſs, I ſhall conclude that we are deſtined by heaven to ſhare heavy calamities, that we are going to be viſited for our manifold and aggravated tranſgreſſions, that we are to expiate the guilt of our iniquities in Africa, of our rapacities in the Eaſt, of our cruelties and oppreſſions in the Weſt, and of our neglect of the education, morals, and comfort of our poor at home; that we are to feel the conſequences of our paſt ſins, and to make atonement to that divine juſtice, which, I believe, we have more than any other nation, offended againſt. Oh let us, by our returning reaſon, by moral amendment and reformation, induce high heaven to alter its dread decrees!

If to have peace be of this moment, it may be aſked, why you, my friends, have not ſtepped forwards? That you have not done this, I believe, I am warranted in ſaying, is not becauſe you were

ſlightly

ſlightly impreſſed with the rectitude and propriety of the ſtep, it was not that you heſitated to commit yourſelves to the public as friends to peace, or from want of due reſpect to the conſtituted authorities of the country; you have lain ſtill as a body, becauſe to take part as a body, you judge it not conſiſtent with your principles, in political matters. As individuals you have lain ſtill, and in ſo doing, I think, you have acted wiſely, becauſe you laboured under ſuſpicions, which you muſt have been mad to have given any ground for, which nothing in your conduct ever warranted, and which had your ſituation been, with any attention, conſidered, would never have been entertained; ſuſpicions charging you with nothing leſs than hoſtility to a government which has frequently received from you no inconſiderable ſupport, in whoſe burthens you have ever chearfully ſhared, and for reſpect to whoſe laws you have ever been exemplary; though, as reſpects you, it has not certainly been laviſh of favour or privilege, or always alert in affording protection. But whatever you receive at its hands, be it ever your ſtudy to deſerve good. You were aware, alſo, that eſtimable fellow citizens harboured ſuſpicions to your diſadvantage, did not honour you with the confidence they were once wont. I believe, in my conſcience, our country will ſuffer through this injuſtice to you; but you have acted wiſely, and as became

became men. Let us hope that others who have more weight, will take up the buſineſs, and they may reckon, I am confident, upon your moſt hearty concurrence and moſt ſtrenuous ſupport. Now that I am upon this ſubject, and having recommended peace abroad, I am naturally led to recommend to you peace at home.

What I now call your attention to has one recommendation, which I could wiſh it poſſeſſed in a leſs degree, but as it does poſſeſs it ſo eminently, I pray it may operate ſtrongly in its favour. I mean the recommendation of novelty. We have around us in this place ſad monuments of the want of internal peace, monuments I hope we all witneſs with ſorrow and regret. Internal peace is the higheſt honour of a nation; the want of it its greateſt reproach. Diſſenſions may exiſt in ſeaſons of proſperity, but in that of danger they ſhould vaniſh. Danger ſhould open all eyes to diſcern what the public good demands; this ſhould form a rallying point to which all parties ſhould reſort. Danger ſhould bring on union. In union there is ſtrength; the idea of it produces effects in this way which are beyond calculation; the want of it operates in a contrary direction in the ſame degree.

Have

Have not the independent and induſtrious of all parties among us intereſts very ſimilar? The meaſures which militate againſt the proſperity, which check the induſtry, which involve in danger the affairs of the one, act in the ſame manner upon the other. Have we not a community of intereſts? Why not be faithful to thoſe intereſts? Why not unite in promoting them? Think you not that different parties deal ſomewhat hardly by one another? If we gave one another a little more credit for judgment, integrity, and conduct, do you think we ſhould be much in the wrong? Few men wilfully err. May there not be error on both ſides? Let us treat even one another's errors with ſome reſpect; on whatever ſide error is, it will die away, but may laſt a time; under gentle treatment it melts down faſteſt; harſh generally prolongs it.

But what do our differences amount to? Are we not agreed that every man ſhould offer homage to his Maker in the manner which his conſcience dictates? On theſe ſubjects who is vain enough to think that he alone is in the right, who ſo weak and narrow-minded as to eſteem his neighbour the leſs, becauſe their creeds are not the ſame? Be religious practice, be its gentle unaſſuming temper our only ground of conteſt, here let rivalſhip diſplay itſelf, here let us contend! How worthy, how

beneficial

beneficial the ſtruggles! Be the temper and practice of religion all with us! Be it deemed a breach of good manners; nay, I go further, be it deemed an immorality to eſteem a man the leſs on account of his religion! In the intercourſe of life be his conduct as a man, and as a member of ſociety alone conſidered! I truſt that good temper in theſe matters makes ſome progreſs among us, that the men who would foment differences, who would blow up and keep alive the flame of party ſpirit, are loſing their conſequence and credit, and making faſt towards that contempt and inſignificance, which are the leaſt that the ſpirit they have promoted, and the acts they have been engaged in, deſerve.

This party charges, that with a love of change, with wiſhing to overſet our form of government, that, again, retorts upon its opponents a hatred of liberty, and a predilection in favour of arbitrary power. Theſe charges, on the one ſide and on the other, are, doubtleſs, unfounded, except it be in inſtances which, on account of their paucity, are undeſerving of notice. The difference between us, I preſume, reſpects the quantum of liberty conſiſtent, in preſent circumſtances, with the preſervation of public order. Surely, on a matter ſo nice, with which expediency has ſo much to do, and which ſo much varies its aſpect, as regarded from different

different points of view, we may differ, and differ widely, without incurring any imputations which affect the heart or the underſtanding, without that eſtrangement which ſhould prevent our acting together in matters about which we are agreed. We differ leſs about improvements, than about the ſeaſon and mode of introducing them. Are we not agreed that the hand of time wears out the moſt complete and durable fabrics, that without repair they muſt fall into decay, that changes in notions, manners, and cuſtoms require correſponding political changes? Do we not admit, that the nobleſt quality which can characteriſe any thing, is a capacity of perpetual improvement, that even the courſe of nature conſtantly undergoes change; that the Britiſh conſtitution itſelf is a maſs of changes? Are we not agreed, that as knowledge diffuſes itſelf among a people, their conſtitution ſhould become freer; that as intelligence extends, privilege ſhould extend; and that it is in every good conſtitution to favour ſuch extenſions? I am aware, that the Britiſh conſtitution has ſuffered much by the delay of reform; but I truſt that it ſtill retains vigour and ſtrength enough to admit of wholeſome repairs without endangering its exiſtence. When I conſider the blood that has been ſhed, the treaſure ſquandered, within the recollection of the youngeſt among us; when I con-

ſider the enormous increaſe of our burthens; when I conſider the vices of the repreſentation, I do hope we ſhall all live to ſee its more groſs corruptions removed, its chief abuſes corrected. I think, however, that the advocates of the meaſure have done wiſely in waving it for the preſent, as a buſineſs of more immediate importance preſſes upon our attention, a buſineſs ſufficient to engroſs it all; I mean the reſtoration of tranquility between us and our neighbours. This is what your country demands; ye, her ſons, be not deaf to her voice. In her name, in the name of all you hold dear and valuable, in the name of every intereſt you prize, offer up at her ſhrine all your prejudices and antipathies, all perſonal conſiderations! Let every head deviſe, let every hand be at work upon what ſhall conduce to the reſtoration of peace! And Oh Britain, Oh beloved country, ſoon mayeſt thou rejoice in its bleſſings! Ever retain thy preſent high ſtation among the countries of the earth! Be ſtill the temple of freedom, the habitation of its bleſſings! Be the ſoil where enterprize ſprings up, where induſtry proſpers, where principle gets ſtrength! Be the land of profound ſcience, of elegant literature, of aſpiring arts, of pure morals, and of a mild and tolerant religion! May France, always thy rival, and now thy enemy, ſpeedily be united to thee in bonds of

laſting and honourable amity! May ſhe give up all views of aggrandizement! May ſhe practice the moderation ſhe profeſſes, in future honour the liberty which by her exceſſes ſhe has injured, ſecure her independence, ſit down under that form of government which is moſt agreeable to herſelf, and between that government and our own, let the only conteſt be, which ſhall render its ſubjects moſt intelligent, virtuous, and happy! Oh ſpeedily come the day when governments ſhall know no other rivalſhip!

THE

Welch Freeholder's farewell Epiſtles

TO THE

BISHOP OF ST. DAVID's,

And his other Tracts,

4 OC 58

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